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E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/09/2017  
TAGS: [CJAN](#) [ASEC](#) [KTIA](#) [BH](#)  
SUBJECT: (U) BELIZE: AMBASSADOR PRESSES FOR BETTER RESPONSE  
ON STOLEN CARS

Classified By: Ambassador Robert J. Dieter for reason 1.4(b) (d)

[1](#)1. (U) Ambassador and DCM met with Foreign Minister Lisa Shoman to express concern about the lack of response to our requests, under the bilateral Stolen Car Treaty, for the return of vehicles stolen from the U.S. We currently have multiple requests pending regarding three vehicles. Although the terms of the treaty call for a reply within 30 days, diplomatic notes from as far back as February remain unanswered.

[1](#)2. (U) Minister Shoman apologized for the lack of response and promised action on the requests by the end of November. MFA staff blamed the police for the problems, saying that they had verbally provided clearance for the return of the vehicles but had not yet given approval in writing.

[1](#)3. (C) COMMENT: The treaty has not functioned well since late in 2006 when the GOB requested a change in notification procedures and asked that each request come by diplomatic note rather than the previous system of a memo from the RSO. Since early 2007 we have had five notes about stolen cars go unanswered, with a verbal explanation that required paperwork was not being completed by the police or Customs. We have heard informally that one of the cars we had requested be returned was actually being driven by a senior GOB official, which may explain why the paperwork was slow in coming from his department. END COMMENT.  
DIETER